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The current parental consent bills before the Senate Judiciary Committee are unnecessary and redundant. Michigan law already prohibits Michigan minors from seeking an abortion without parental consent, a judicial waiver, or a physician's certification of an emergency.

Due to the strong prevention and education programs offered by organizations like Planned Parenthood, teen pregnancies are at historic lows. In Michigan, the pregnancy rate for women ages 15-17 declined 54% between the years 1990 and 2009, according to records maintained by the Michigan Department of Community Health.

In these tough economic times, it is difficult to understand why the legislature is focusing on divisive social issues rather than addressing the economy, jobs and access to health care. If legislators truly want to spare teens and their parents the difficulty of an unplanned pregnancy, they would invest in family planning and sex education programs.

A key role of Planned Parenthood is to replace fear with facts, misinformation with education. We're here for schools and the youth who need comprehensive sex education programs from abstinence to birth control.

We strongly believe that parents should be involved in their children's lives and we're here for moms and dads who might be uncertain about—or just don't know how—to talk to their teens about sex. At Planned Parenthood, we strongly encourage and support parent-teen communication. Our local affiliates across the state work each day to strengthen and support parent-teen communication by teaching medically accurate, age-appropriate sex education that includes information about birth control, abstinence and responsible decision making skills. Last year, we provided educational services to over 30,000 Michiganders through programs that help give parents and teens the tools they need to talk to one another about the issue surrounding sexuality.

We work hard every day to prevent unintended pregnancies. We hope the Michigan Legislature will begin to work just as hard every day to create jobs.

It is clearly obvious that we all want to decrease the number of unintended pregnancies and need for abortion, especially for minors. I challenge each one of you on this committee to work with Planned Parenthood and other organizations that are truly interested in reducing abortion through prevention based polices, such as:

- Increasing access to family planning,
- Improving access and insurance coverage of contraceptives, and
- Teaching our young people to protect themselves and make responsible decisions with comprehensive abstinence plus sex education.

If we truly want to reduce the number of abortions in Michigan, surely efforts focused on preventing unintended pregnancies would be a better place to begin.